

India will rise to tackle global challenges, support emerging economies: Pradhan

STATE TIMES NEWS

MUMBAI: Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan on Sunday said India will meet its domestic priorities and global challenges, and play a key role in supporting emerging economies in the Global South and low-income countries in the years ahead.

He was speaking at the 'Bharat Innovates Deep-Tech Pre-Summit' at the Indian Institute of Technology Bombay (IIT Bombay) here.

"I have complete faith that India will not only meet the country's needs ... but will also meet the global challenges. Especially, the

emerging economy of the Global South, the low-cost economy of the poor countries, will be met by India in the coming days," he said.

The summit, organised as a precursor to the Bharat Innovates 2026 event in France, brought together 137 deep-tech startups selected from over 3,000 applications received from across the country. The selected startups will represent India's deep-tech ecosystem in France.

While India's priority should be on sustainability, agriculture, healthcare, livelihood, and the production sector, the country will fulfil the needs of the Global

South through deep technology, Pradhan said.

"Bharat Innovates is working with such commitment. In the coming days, Bharat Innovates will become a societal movement involving leadership, investors, industry, academia, and policymakers. It will be made a public movement and given a distinct identity," he said.

In the coming decade, he said, India will achieve a leadership position in the energy sector.

"We are in a new situation in the world today. If the biomass of our 600 million metric tonnes is converted into energy, we can become

a net energy exporter. Despite challenges in hydrogen energy, India can reach a global leadership position in that sector," he added.

He said that by 2047, India must transform into a developed economy and should aim to lead in at least 1,000 technologies globally.

The Global South may not be able to afford expensive technologies from the Western bloc, and there is growing interest in adopting India's more accessible and cost-effective technological solutions, said Pradhan.

"India is the world's model in digital transactions. India has set up a model in

affordable healthcare. India has taken responsibility for the world in generic medicines. These are a few examples in some sectors.

"There is more work to be done and to achieve all this, it is our responsibility to make a long-term strategy and convert this technology into a public purpose," the minister added.

The event also provided a platform for interactions between startups, venture capital firms, and industry representatives, fostering meaningful partnerships and enabling them to explore pathways for commercialisation and global market expansion.

Jal Mahotsav Pakhwada concludes in Bandipora

STATE TIMES NEWS

BANDIPORA: District Administration Bandipora on Sunday concluded the Jal Mahotsav Pakhwada with a district-level programme held on the occasion of World Water Day at the Conference Hall, Mini Secretariat Bandipora, along with activities across all Panchayats of the district.

The programme was organised under the Jal Jeevan Mission as part of the fortnight-long activities conducted from March 8 to March 22, aimed at promoting awareness regarding safe drinking water, water conservation, and community participation in the management of rural water supply systems. The concluding event witnessed participation of

officers from various departments, field functionaries, and representatives from Panchayati Raj Institutions. During the programme, emphasis was laid on the importance of sustainable water management, protection of water sources, and ensuring safe and adequate drinking water for all households.

Speakers on the occasion highlighted the achievements and activities carried out during the Jal Mahotsav Pakhwada, including Gram Sabha meetings on water management, awareness rallies, school-based activities, and demonstrations on water quality testing using Field Test Kits (FTKs).

On the occasion, Special Gram Sabhas were held

across various Panchayats of Bandipora district during the Jal Mahotsav Pakhwada, where local residents, PRI members, and officials actively participated in discussions on water management and conservation.

The meetings focused on strengthening community involvement in the operation and maintenance of water supply systems, ensuring cleanliness around water sources, and promoting sustainable use of water resources.

The programme concluded with a reaffirmation of commitment towards achieving the goals of Jal Jeevan Mission and ensuring safe, sustainable, and accessible drinking water for every household in the district.

EC likely to publish SIR supplementary voter list today

STATE TIMES NEWS

KOLKATA: The Election Commission is likely to publish the first supplementary voters' list for poll-bound West Bengal on Monday evening as part of the ongoing SIR exercise, officials said.

The list will be released in the same manner as the final electoral roll, with copies sent to district election officers and subsequently displayed at polling booths across the state, they said.

"The adjudication process has been extensive, and a significant number of cases, over 27 lakh, have already been resolved after due verification. The supplementary list transparently incorporates these outcomes," an EC official said.

These 27 lakh voters were among 60 lakh who were marked as "under adjudication" in the final voters' list published on February 28.

"A large number of entries were kept under adjudication for further scrutiny. The supplementary list reflects the outcome of that verification process. The list will first be displayed at polling booths. It will subsequently be made available online," the official said.

Security arrangements have also been tightened ahead of the publication of the list, he said.

"We are taking all necessary precautions to ensure that the publication process remains peaceful. Adequate security arrangements and close monitoring will be ensured in sensitive locations," he added. A total of 705 judicial officers have been engaged in determining inclusion or

exclusion of names in the supplementary list, in line with the EC's guidelines, the official said. The state government, meanwhile, on Saturday directed district magistrates to take precautionary measures to maintain law and order during the publication of the supplementary list.

"Appropriate precautionary steps may be taken for crowd control, strict vigil at vulnerable points, and maintenance of law and order," a communication from the Home and Hill Affairs Department stated.

District officials have also been asked to ensure necessary infrastructure support and inform respective superintendents and commissioners of police.

Polling for the 294-member assembly will be held on April 23 and 29, with counting scheduled for May 4.

RSS chief hails Gangadharrao Fadnavis for imparting lessons on politics as social service

STATE TIMES NEWS

NAGPUR: The late Gangadharrao Fadnavis, father of Devendra Fadnavis, shaped the thinking of the Maharashtra Chief Minister as well as Union Minister Nitin Gadkari, enabling them to view politics as a means of social service, Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh chief Mohan Bhagwat said on Sunday.

Speaking after inaugurating the Gangadharrao Fadnavis Diagnostic Centre in Nagpur, Bhagwat said the facility, which is for public service, is aptly named after a person who demonstrated through his life how a social and political worker should function.

"It was Gangadharrao who shaped the minds of Devendra Fadnavis and Nitin Gadkari, who can confidently say that politics means social service. Gangadharrao was skilled in connecting with people and keeping them engaged in social work. He remained honest and worked without self-interest while pursuing a larger social goal," Bhagwat said. Despite limited resources and funds during

his active years, Gangadharrao focused on bringing people together for a larger cause, and support followed as more people joined, the RSS chief opined.

Service is not a favour but a means of self-purification, and keeping the mind engaged in such work is essential, he emphasised.

There is a surge of people offering service during election periods, but such efforts are sometimes driven by self-interest or fear and does not sustain over a period of time, Bhagwat noted.

Speaking on the occasion, the CM acknowledged that the work done by his father had a huge impact on him to serve the society selflessly.

Expressing happiness at the inauguration of the facility, Fadnavis said the team behind the diagnostic centre had insisted that it be named after his father.

The CM said he and his family had never named any of their charity initiatives after his father, but the team behind the diagnostic centre managed to convince his mother. The diagnostic centre has modern equipment to provide a wide array of serv-

ices at affordable prices or even free, he said.

Observing his father's work during childhood had a huge impact on him and led him to serve society selflessly, Fadnavis said.

Due to inspiration from the RSS and its chief Mohan Bhagwat and under the guidance of Gadkari, various welfare initiatives are being run, Fadnavis said.

"The government has created a network 4500 hospitals in Maharashtra providing free treatment for 2400 diseases. Along with this, there is also need for such diagnostic centres in big numbers,"

he added.

Recalling his close and long association with Gangadharrao, Gadkari said the former worked selflessly for the BJP and Jana Sangh in very adverse times.

He worked for the expansion of the party in Nagpur, Gadkari added.

Gadkari said he and Fadnavis are "ideology political workers", adding that the need of the hour is for all to understand the meaning of politics.

Politics is about serving the underprivileged in society, the senior BJP leader asserted.

EC tightens vigil in Bengal ahead of polls; senior police officers start police station visit

STATE TIMES NEWS

KOLKATA: Senior police officials began visiting police stations across West Bengal from Sunday as the Election Commission stepped up monitoring Assembly poll preparedness and security arrangements in the state, officers said.

During these visits, officers-in-charge at police stations were briefed on measures imperative for ensuring free and fair polling, with a strong focus on maintaining law and order and preventing any form

of electoral malpractice.

In line with directives from the poll panel, police commissioners and superintendents of police have started conducting ground-level reviews, an official in the West Bengal Chief Electoral Officer's office said.

"Senior officers have been instructed to guide local police units to ensure a peaceful, free and fair election," he said.

"The focus is on building confidence among voters and strict enforcement of measures to curb any attempt at malprac-

tice, including booth capturing or intimidation," the official added.

As part of this exercise, Kolkata Police Commissioner Ajay Nand visited Bhangar police station and held meetings with officers from the division, briefing them on the Election Commission's guidelines. "Every officer has been briefed. Electors should be able to cast their vote without fear. That is the main objective," Nand said.

He said multiple confidence-

building and preventive measures were being undertaken. "We have taken many measures, such as identifying vulnerable areas, hamlets and persons, and communicating with them," the police officer said.

He said, "To increase police presence and visibility, we are patrolling extensively. Officers are visiting different areas. There is a history of political clashes, but we have to ensure that there is no violence. If there are any signs, we will take preventive action."

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